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TRANSMITTAL # 7

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 27, 2001

TO: Idaho Workforce Development Council

FROM: Lupé Wissel, Director, Idaho Commission on Aging

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. Wissel for Lupé Wissel".

SUBJECT: New requirement for Governor's State Senior Employment Services
Coordination Plan

ACTION REQUESTED: None. For informational purposes at this time.

Background:

The Idaho Commission on Aging was designated by the Governor as the administrative entity for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) in 1978. The SCSEP Program is authorized by Title V of the Older Americans Act. The Idaho Commission on Aging (ICOA) is also the state agency designated to administer all programs under the Older Americans Act.

The Older Americans Act (OAA) was re-authorized by Congress in late 2000. The re-authorized OAA contains language providing that the Governor of each State complete an annual State Senior Employment Services Coordination Plan; the language is found at Section 503 of the Older Americans Act.

The State agency responsible for the administration of the State SCSEP grant is directed to take the lead to assure that a State Plan is prepared. The U.S. Department of Labor, Division of Older Worker Programs, encourages the Governor to include a broad array of partners and stakeholders, such as the State Workforce Development Council, in the development of the plan.

The purpose of the plan is to improve coordination among organizations that can be engaged in older worker activities. The planning process is intended to be a vehicle to enhance employment services for older workers.

The U. S. Department of Labor has said they will be flexible in their review of the State Plans because of the time constraints imposed for developing the plan, the absence of implementing regulations, and in recognition that the initial plans are first-time efforts. The U. S. Department of Labor issued the directive for plan submission on February 2, 2001. The Labor Department intends to apply the experience gained through the planning process this year to the development of formal procedures and rules over the next year. Idaho Commission on Aging staff has been appointed to the State Plan Work Group established by the U. S. Department of Labor.

ICOA presented Idaho's overall approach to plan development, as discussed in this document, to the U. S. Dept. of Labor. Their response was that the approach seemed practical, well coordinated, non-duplicative and acceptable. ICOA also proposed the overall approach to the Office of the Governor, the Commissioners of the ICOA and the Area Agency on Aging Directors during the month of February, 2001. The State Plan is due to the U. S. Department of Labor by June 1, 2001.

Overall Approach: The ICOA's approach for the initial plan will be to describe the current coordination framework for Idaho's SCSEP with our plan to extend and improve coordination during program year 2001. ICOA will identify groups and organizations currently engaged in the coordination process and will describe the level and extent of coordination. ICOA will place primary emphasis on achieving integration of the State Senior Employment Services Coordination Plan into the broader Older Americans Act and ICOA Strategic Plans and Idaho's Workforce Investment Act Plan. This integration includes merging, to the extent possible, the existing public comment and input schedule required for all these planning documents.

Sections 1 and 2: The new legislation requires broad-based participation from both the aging network and Idaho's employment/training network. Specifically, the plan must ensure participation of the following:

- Individuals representing the state and the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) in the state
- State Workforce Development Council and local workforce investment boards
- Public and private non-profit agencies providing employment services
- Each SCSEP grantee operating within Idaho
- Social service organizations providing services to older individuals
- Grantees under Title III of the OAA
- Affected communities
- Under-served older individuals
- Community-based organizations serving the needs of the older individuals
- Business organizations
- Labor organizations

Most of these entities are also targeted as participants under the broader OAA State Plan and/or the WIA State Plan. To avoid duplication of effort, ICOA will present the entire planning process for all aging services as an integrated whole under a Single State Strategic Plan.

Section 3 Public Participation: Because of the short time frame for submission of this initial plan, ICOA will not hold public forums to solicit input and comment. However, such forums to provide opportunities for public participation will be a part of all future revisions or updating of the initial plan document and will be held in conjunction with the same public input requirement ICOA follows with the OAA and Strategic Plans. Over the next year, ICOA will also work with State Workforce Development Council to explore how the Coordination Plan can be integrated into the existing WIA public participation process to involve business, labor, the local Workforce Investment Boards and affected communities.

Section 4 Plan Provisions:

- (a) **Basic Distribution of SCSEP Positions** – ICOA met with SCSEP grantees to develop the equitable distribution report on February 16, 2001. This report provides the basic information needed to assess the location of the eligible population and the current distribution of people being served. The report, which is intended to identify any areas that are significantly under-served or over-served, shows that Idaho is at or near equity in each of the six Planning and Service Areas. The report will be incorporated into the Governor's State Senior Employment Services Coordination Plan.
- (b) **Special Populations** – Sec. 503(a)(4)(C) of the OAA requires information about the relative distribution of eligible individuals with greatest economic and/or social need. For 2001, this information will be provided on a statewide basis.
 - (1) "Greatest economic need" means those persons at or below the poverty level established by the Department of Health and Human Services and approved by the Office of Management and Budget.
 - (2) "Greatest social need" means needs caused by non-economic factors. It includes persons with physical and mental disabilities; language barriers; and cultural, social, or geographic isolation, including isolation brought about by racial or ethnic status.
- (c) **Types of Skills** – The State Plan must address the employment situations and the skills available among the eligible population. Although this information is not required for program year 2001, ICOA will describe how this information will be collected in future years.

- (d) Community Service needs – Although information identifying special populations and local community service needs is not required for PY 2001, ICOA will provide a narrative description of how the information will be collected, monitored and measured in future years.
- (e) Coordination with the Workforce Investment Act – A narrative description of measures taken by SCSEP grantees in the state to facilitate coordination with the activities under the Workforce Investment Act shall be provided. The Plan guidance also calls for recommendations for extended coordination and seamless processes. To that end, the Plan shall recommend that dual eligibility be extended to low-income older individuals for SCSEP and Intensive and Training Services available through the WIA (similar to the dual eligibility provisions that applied to SCSEP and JTPA participants).

Agreements documenting current coordination efforts will be included as attachments to the Plan.

Section 5 Plan Recommendations: In this section, the Governor may make recommendations to the Secretary of Labor on actions to be taken by SCSEP grantees in the state to improve SCSEP services. The recommendation to extend SCSEP and WIA dual eligibility for low income, older individuals will be included in this Section.